



OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Chambers

September 15, 2012

STAFF REPORT: Eastern Kern County Acquisition

STAFF: Jeff Gaffney, District Superintendent and
Dan Canfield, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Eastern Kern County Land Acquisition

Summary

California State Parks, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division is carrying out field investigations for a proposed acquisition of land in eastern Kern County. The proposed land acquisition involves approximately 28,500 acres of land currently under private ownership. The land parcels to be acquired are due west of Red Rock Canyon State Park and are interspersed in checkerboard fashion amongst land owned primarily by the Bureau of Land Management (see Map – Attachment A).

Discussion

August 2, 2012 Focus Group Meeting

On August 2, 2012 the OHMVR Division hosted a professionally facilitated focus group meeting at Jawbone Station Visitor Center. Approximately 25 people participated in the focus group meeting.

Focus group participants had the opportunity to hear presentations by OHMVR Division staff and representatives of The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, United States Marine Corps, and Friends of Jawbone regarding the proposed acquisition. Participants shared ideas and concerns to the entire group. Participants were then divided into small groups. At the end of the discussion period, each small group reporter presented their findings to the entire group. Some of concerns raised include:

- Expansion of wind energy development
- Potential loss of OHV recreational opportunities
- Protection of natural and cultural resources
- Impacts to current cattle grazing operations
- Improving environmental compliance on existing trail systems
- Using a transparent process with local involvement to acquire the land

CEQA EIR Process

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the OHMVR Division is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prior to making a decision on whether to proceed with the acquisition. The EIR will analyze the physical environmental effects of the property purchase, including potential changes in land use and management that could occur should the property be acquired and operated by the OHMVR Division. A general plan would eventually be prepared for the parcels, but a general plan is not part of the current CEQA process.

A CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP) will be issued in September 2012. The NOP issuance will begin a 30-day agency/public comment period that will involve public meetings. Once the Draft EIR is released later this year, agencies and the public will have 45 days to submit their comments. The Final EIR will include all comments submitted and provide responses to all environmental points raised.

Native American Consultation

OHMVR Division Archaeologists have begun Native American Consultation (NAC) in support of the proposed acquisition. The Native American Heritage Commission provided the OHMVR Division with 25 NAC contacts. Each NAC contact was provided with information about the proposed land acquisition via certified mail, phone and email. To date only one response was received. The OHMVR Division plans to reach out again to the NAC contacts when the NOP is issued.

Preliminary Land Management Strategy

The OHMVR Division and BLM have been coordinating and communicating regularly to ensure immediate implementation of a habitat and soil conservation management plan should the land be acquired. Furthermore, the OHMVR Division requested funding for potential staffing required for resource conservation and law enforcement.

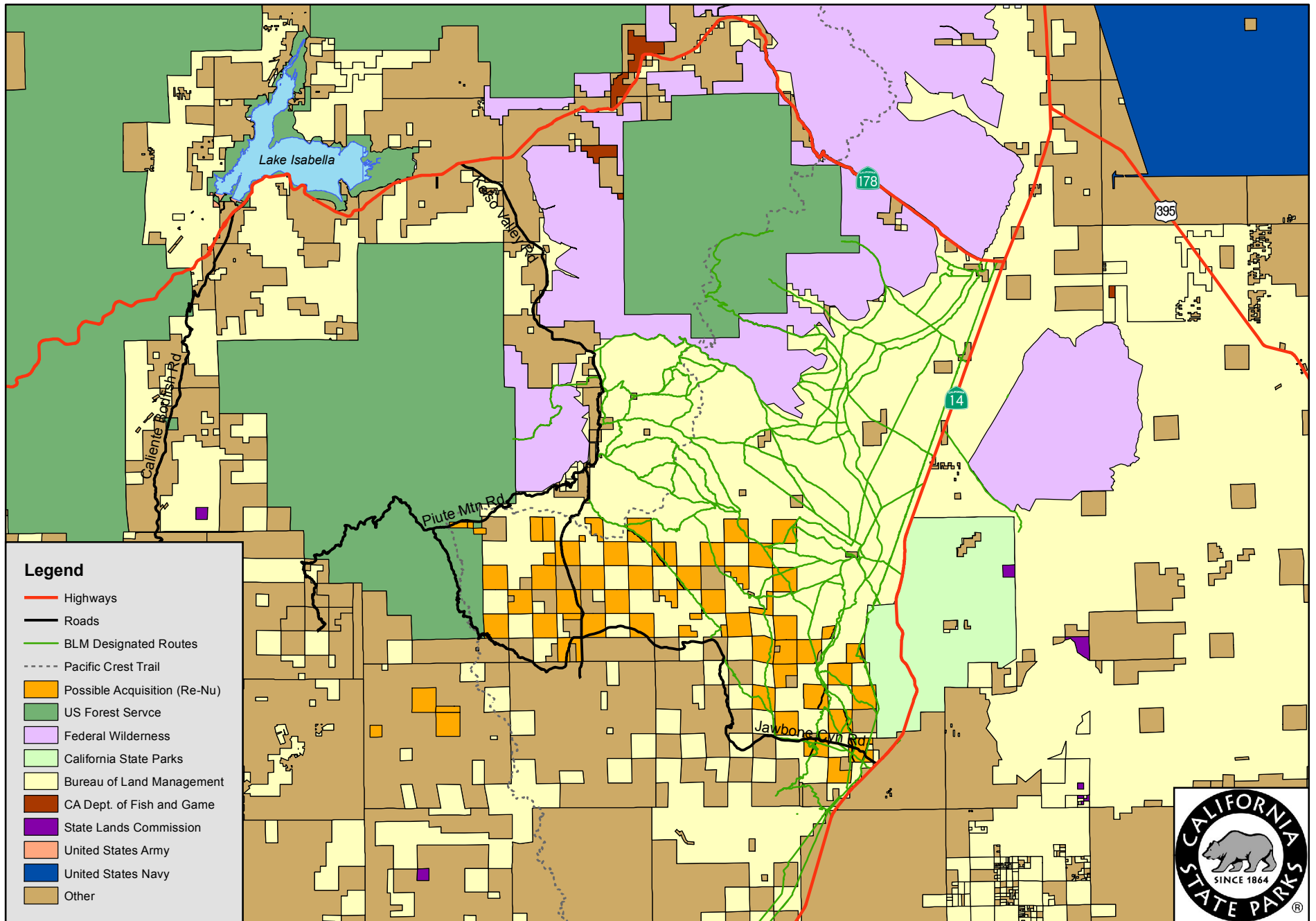
Commission Action

For information only.

Attachments

Attachment A – Project Map

Land Ownership, Northeastern Kern County



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1:350,000